

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 13 have been amended to require that the crosslinking agent is selected from the group consisting of aldehydes, acetals and ketals and to require that the weight ratio of the poly(vinyl alcohol) binder to particles of fumed alumina is from about 1:20 to about 1:5. Support for this amendment is to be found in the original dependent claims, now canceled. Claim 1 has also been amended to require that the crosslinker is present in an amount of at least 30 weight percent as supported on page 10, line 5 of the original specification.

These amendments are believed to further distinguish from the prior-art references cited by the Examiner. In particular, the amount of crosslinking agent *actually used* in Kasahara et al. is calculated to be about 15 weight percent. Furthermore, Kasahara et al. uses boric acid or borax, rather than aldehydes, acetals and ketals. Applicants have found that the use of boron-containing inorganic crosslinkers in the amount necessary in the present invention would be impractical because it would gel prior to coating. The Examiner has not shown the use of anywhere near 30 weight percent crosslinker in any prior-art reference, which is a clear indication that the broad range mentioned in Kasahara is unsupported. The result of using unconventionally higher amounts would be unpredictable and there would be insufficient or no motivation for the skilled artisan to, for example, double the amount of crosslinker that is taught to work just fine.


It is respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious that such a large increase in the amount of crosslinker would have such unexpected results, particularly when 5% is typically and conventionally used. Contrary to the Examiner's suggestion that the dry time is proportional to the amount of crosslinking and that the results are, therefore, obvious is inconsistent with the facts. As made clear from Table 3, increasing (almost doubling) the amount of crosslinker from 6.6 weight % to 10 weight % did not result in nearly the kind of jump obtained by increasing the amount of crosslinker from 10 to 20 weight %, i.e. about a ten-fold increase in dry time in going from 10 to 20 weight %. It is further noted that the dry time did not increase in going from 20 to 40 weight percent.

Finally, the new lower limit of 30 weight percent adds to the unexpected results obtained by the present invention, since clearly improved coalescence is obtained according to Table 4 using 30 weight percent of crosslinker. This is in addition to the very significant improvement in dry time, as established by Applicant's declaration under Rule 132.

Regarding the slight change in the amount of fumed alumina, this was necessary in order to make up a total of 100 percent, and would have no material affect on the results.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested. A prompt and favorable action by the Examiner is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe any remaining issues may be resolved via a telephone interview, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' representative at the number below to discuss such issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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